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NO 1
ISSUE 493

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Touring the art galleries – The City Art Gallery Bristol

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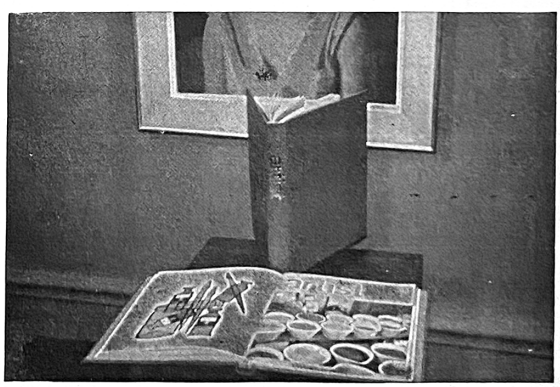

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THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

THE IDEA of using non-reflective glass for pictures seems, at first thought, an attractive one. We have all suffered the irritation of being unable to see a picture properly because of bright reflections from the surface of the glass. This is particularly tiresome when pictures are hung in a room opposite a source of light. Not all picture galleries are top-lit, and even if they are, dark paintings can still look almost like mirrors from certain points of view.

In recent years a type of glass has been produced which, though transparent, does not reflect with mirror-like brightness from its outer face. Pictures framed with this material have been coming up with increasing frequency before selection committees; but unfortunately it would appear that this is one of those situations where the cure is worse than the disease. Non-reflective glass, at least in its present state of development, has a curiously deadening effect which has led to the rejection of many pictures so framed from big exhibitions such as the R.A. In fact the Academy has, since last year, found it necessary to include in its "Instructions to Artists" a sentence to the effect that pictures framed in non-reflecting glass are no longer admissible.

The first time I became aware of this new form of glazing material was at a show of Picasso drawings at the Marlborough Gallery some years ago. My immediate reaction was that the drawings looked like reproductions. The crispness and immediacy of the line seemed to be just that little bit softened. I know nothing about the technology of glass, but I believe that the surface has to be treated with a substance with a different refractive index. Whatever the technical process involved, there always appears to be a softening or deadening effect which smoothes away variety of surface and reduces any artifact that is put under the glass to a common denominator. It can even, sometimes, be difficult to see what medium has been used. I have seen small paintings that could have been done either in oil or gouache; the surface becomes a little like a plastic tea tray, or one of those table mats with pictures on them.

However, there is worse to come. On a recent visit to the Wallace Collection—which I would have thought was the gallery in London least likely to try out new and controversial display methods—my eye was caught by a small picture that seemed to have a curious purplish-blue tint over part of it. Further investigation showed that four famous French pictures, all on a very small scale, had been reglazed. They were Fragonard's *Souvenir* and *The Schoolmistress* and Watteau's *Champs Elysées* and *Lady at her toilet*. The last-named painting by Watteau suffered most, for it hangs rather high up, and from one point of view can be blotted out by blue reflection. If you move around, the reflections can of course be dodged; but this is true also of ordinary glass, and at least when that is used the reflections are what you would expect and not of a totally alien colour.

As it happened, there was an attendant nearby. Although his eyes were shut and it looked doubtful whether he was still breathing, I bent over him and asked, as innocently as I could, what had happened to these pictures. He came alive rather suddenly at this, got to his feet and moved off, throwing the one phrase, "non-reflecting glass", over his shoulder as he went.

A letter to the Director elicited the information that the trustees have "more or less decided not to pursue this particular type of glass." The writer adds: "... as you notice, the result is different from picture to picture, depending on their positions on the wall and the incidence of daylight, which changes from hour to hour. On the other hand, when circumstances are at their best, very little actual reflection is given, and the colours of the paint are in no way distorted. The purplish light given off by the glass is not in fact a reflection as such, but is part of the substance of the glass itself... We are interested to learn that the R.A. will not accept pictures glazed in this way, but the effect certainly produces no deadness on some of the pictures here."

I am very glad to hear that this particular type of glass has been "more or less" decided against; in fact I am surprised that it was thought necessary to inflict it on the public for so long. Perhaps by the time this article appears it will have been removed but other types of non-reflecting glass are, presumably, still under consideration.

I would like to appeal to the Trustees to consult some painters when such changes are under consideration. After all, painters are likely to know more than most people about what does or does not affect a painted surface. Watteau and Fragonard belong to artists, perhaps, more than they do even to the museums or the public, for they are their great ancestors in a difficult craft. I have never yet heard a professional artist of reputation with a good word to say about non-reflective glazing materials.

B.D

NEWS AND REVIEWS

I HAVE often reported on new materials for the sculptor. The latest one on the market is a new modelling compound called "Das Pronto", which is sold by Alec Tiranti Ltd. It is a homogeneous grey modelling material, vacuum packed in an airtight package ready for use. It requires no firing to harden as does ordinary clay, but needs merely to be left for a few hours at normal room temperature.

It could be useful for making sketch models, since the small model may be left to harden by itself without cracking. Armatures to support projections may also be used with it. The finished design may also be coloured with tempera paints and varnished. For maquettes and sketch designs of this nature it could save much time.

Due to simplicity of handling it is of special use to children as a preliminary to handling real ceramic clays.

New Books

Silversmithing by Robert Goodden and Philip Popham (*published by O.U.P. £1.50*). The eleventh in a series of Oxford's Handbooks for artists, *Silversmithing* has been written by two designer craftsmen who have made quite an impact and reputation in the field of modern silversmithing and jewellery design.

Professor Goodden, C.B.E., R.D.I., is Head of the School of Silversmithing and Jewellery at the Royal College of Art and Philip Popham, A.R.C.A., is Senior Tutor at the College. The authors deal with their subject systematically and clearly, from the design to the final embellishment. In addition there are interesting appendices, such as a brief description of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, a list of suppliers and conversion tables. The authors have wisely anticipated the adoption of the metric system and all measurements in the text are therefore metric.

Photographs reproduced from "Silversmithing" by Robert Goodden and Philip Popham.

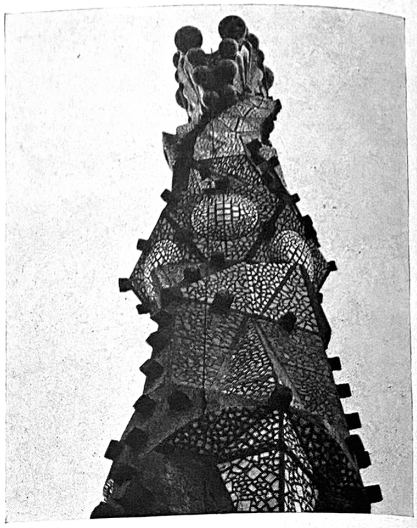
Mosaic History and Technique by Peter Fischer (*published by Thames and Hudson, £3.95*)

In this timely and important work Peter Fischer has made a deep and searching study of an art form that has been in existence for five thousand years. It is timely because mosaicism is once again emerging, after a long gap, as an active and enriching contribution to the world of art.

In his introduction Peter Fischer says, "Today this ancient art is in fact one of the most contemporary as well, for by its very nature it has close affinities with modern styles and the present-day world is particularly well equipped both to develop and apply its potentialities. Mosaic calls for simplification and stylization. It encourages striking effects and heightening of reality; it inclines towards expressionistic vigour and abstract shapes. It practised Pointillism and Op Art thousands of years before Seurat or Vasarely and it has always embraced the principles of collage, of montage and of the *objet trouvé*".

Fischer goes on to say, "It can find opportunities in contemporary architecture, adding life to plain wall spaces without interfering with the idea of functional building . . . ".

The author has produced a fascinating history of the art and deals in detail with old and new methods and materials. Printed in clear, easy-to-read type, it is a well-proportioned book that contains appropriate illustrations in both colour and black and white. I would have preferred the captions to accompany the illustrations, rather than being listed through the book, which makes reference rather tiresome. On the whole, however, it is a worthwhile book to have.



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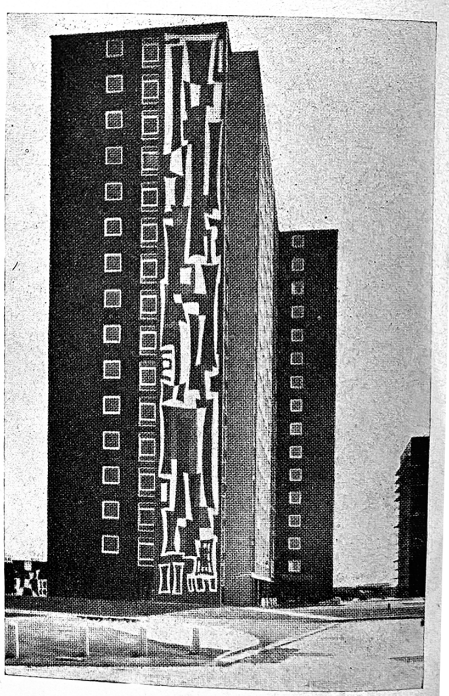


WORKING WITH BATIK

by Noel Dyrenforth

Noel Dyrenforth first became fascinated by batik painting ten years ago. Since that time he has shown his work in more than a dozen one-man and mixed exhibitions. The straightforward appeal of his paintings marks an artistic breakthrough for batik from the realm of craft into a definite art form. Here the artist gives the practical "how-to-do-it recipe" of the craft for the beginner to follow. His work speaks for itself.

Escape Route: batik 48 in. by 37 in. Noel Dyrenforth

AT THE TURN of the 20th century, the pattern of life together with the scope of art changed in Europe. But while painting was being enriched by new discoveries and courageous self-analysis, craft changed very little except for the external composition. The decorative qualities were valued above all other features for years.

About ten years ago the traditional crust was slowly beginning to crack; new attitudes through more widespread education aroused creative independence and integration of the arts. I was first introduced to batik at this time. Unlike other crafts in Europe, batik had not established itself as its practice was relatively unknown. This meant it did not carry any aesthetic preconceptions, except those associated with the eastern culture.

The simplest definition of the Javanese word "batik" is a resist technique for producing designs on fabric. The resist, either wax or starch, is applied to a selected area of the fabric and dyed. The wax areas, which repel the dye, remain the original colour.

Although its origins are obscure, batik has been known in Indonesia since the first and second century A.D., when it was introduced by the Egyptians. The Indonesian batik motifs derive from Indian, Chinese and Arabic decorations. Present-day patterns are developments of the earlier influences, modified and embellished according to time and custom. Each pattern represents a status or district and is worn as part of the national costume.

In the middle of the 17th century, Dutch traders brought the much-prized batiks home with them, but it was not until the late 19th century that the craft was practised in western Europe. The Arts and Crafts Movement, together with the unrestrained opulence of the Art Nouveau era, were ideally suited to the linear style of traditional batik motifs and made batik a

Way Out: batik 38 in. by 66 in. Noel Dyrenforth

popular craft. At that time craftsmen of all kinds were kept busy producing laboriously detailed ornamentation. Since then our attitudes towards the arts, crafts and the individual have changed radically. Now there are signs of a widespread revival in the practice of craft.

I was first attracted by the rich effects produced in batik, which encouraged me to try the process for myself. I found the basic materials needed were simple: the wax, cloth and dye involved my sympathies immediately. Initially I played with the material and gradually the process became more engaging. While experimenting I found that I wasn't susceptible to any particular style: this developed through the nature of the interacting materials.

After spending an inordinate amount of time exploring the possibilities, my main concern became the one of remaining faithful to the medium without allowing myself to be seduced or inhibited by my absorption in the process. My ideas and my ability to produce them seemed at first to be incompatible, but gradually I made some headway, while still preserving the distinctive quality of batik. The colours and shapes seemed to communicate some sense of direction as they evolved. By pursuing new approaches, I slowly built up a base that I could relate to confidently.

Contemporary Batik Technique

Fabric
Use thin fabrics, preferably silk or cotton; avoid fabrics treated with water repellents, and synthetics.

Dyes
Only cold water dyes are suitable, such as Dylon or Procion M dyes.

Wax
Ordinary paraffin wax is adequate and inexpensive—a slight amount of beeswax added provides a more flexible medium.

Tools
Inexpensive bristle brushes. Improvised implements for applying wax can give some unusual textural effects. Objects used in stamp printing, pieces of wood, sponges, etc., can be dipped in the hot wax and applied to the fabric. A special tool called a *tjanting* enables you to use wax for drawing fine lines and detail.

Special Equipment
1. Double boiler or tin can (placed in a pan of water) in which to heat wax.
2. Newspaper.
3. Clothes line.
4. Solvents for removing wax.
5. Rubber gloves.

Drawing the Design
This can be applied spontaneously on to the cloth or transferred from a preliminary design. A soft pencil or charcoal should be used as the lines will wash away in the course of dyeing.

Waxing
Stretch the fabric on a wooden frame with pins. The frame should be arranged so that the material is quite free. Apply molten wax with the brush to areas you want to reserve. The wax must be hot enough to penetrate the fabric immediately upon contact. It is important to plan subsequent waxing stages in advance.

Dyeing
It is advisable to make the first colour the lightest one. You should conceive the design so that one colour adds to another to build up the whole design. The first colour will have considerable influence on the subsequent colours. You will notice during dyeing that the brittle wax surfaces will start cracking and the dye will penetrate these veins. One can encourage this even more by cracking the wax areas by hand before submerging in the dye.

The basic procedure is as follows:
1. Dissolve the dye powder in warm water.
2. Add enough water to cover the fabric in the dye bath.

3. Add salt.
4. Immerse fabric and agitate with dip stick until colour has taken.
5. Remove and hang up the fabric on clothes line.
6. Blot off drops of dye on wax surface.
7. Dry and fix colour.

A tablespoonful of powdered soap in the dye bath helps even absorption of the colour and also strengthens the fixation. Remember that when the dye is wet the colour appears brighter and darker than when it is dry.

Finishing the Batik

After three or four waxings and dyeings, remove the wax from the fabric by absorbing it out with a hot iron. Place the fabric between sheets of newspaper and apply the iron; the newspaper will have to be changed a few times before most of the wax is removed.

Finally the fabric can be washed in a solvent to remove the last traces of wax. This treatment removes the wax more thoroughly than persistent ironing, but special precaution must be taken when working with a flammable solution.

There are many modifications to this simple procedure and many artists working in this medium prefer to use their own innovations, which may be unorthodox but equally effective. One of the common deviations is the hand-painting of the dye on unreserved areas. Personally, I would always advocate an experimental approach, once you have mastered the basic procedure.

* * *

Suppliers of Dyes and Batik Equipment: Candlemaker Supplies, 4 Beaconsfield Terrace Road, London W.14.

Books on Batik:

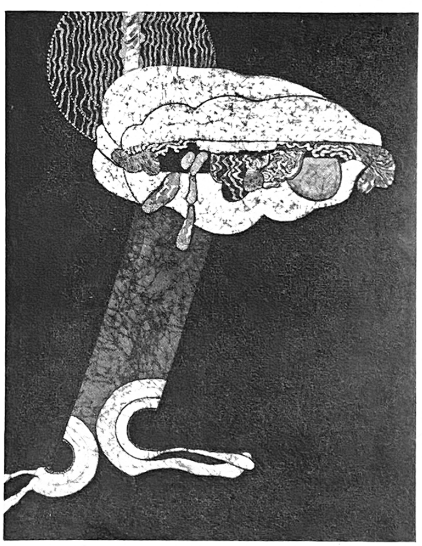
Exploring Fabric Printing by Stuart and Patricia Robinson (Mills & Boon Ltd., London).

Textile Printing and Dyeing by Nora Proud (B. T. Batsford Ltd., London).

Batik by Ila Keller (Prentice Hall, London).

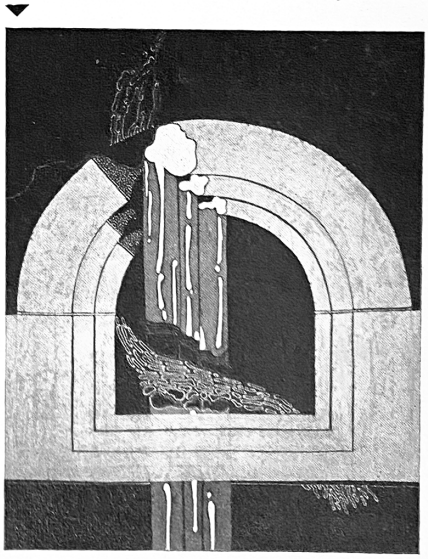
Batik by Sara Nea (Van Nostrand Reinhold Co. Ltd.)

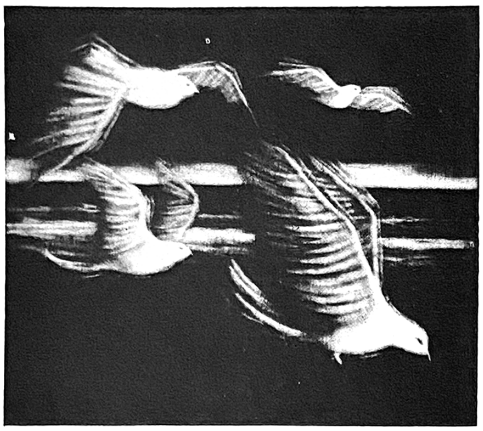
▲ The author working with a *tjanting*



◀ Hamburger: batik 48 in. by 37 in.
Noel Dyrenforth

Going Down: batik 37 in. by 48 in.
Noel Dyrenforth ▼





Gulls: colour aquatint Francis Kelly

THE AQUATINT PROCESS

By Francis Kelly

Francis Kelly first came to England from the United States on a Fulbright scholarship and joined the Graphic Department of the Central School in London. He has lived in this country since 1955 and has had one-man shows with many provincial and London galleries.

In 1966 Francis Kelly was appointed art organizer for the U.S. Embassy's Festival of Arts and Humanities. His paintings were shown in the exhibition "Five American Artists in Britain". The artist is an expert on painting conservation and in 1967 was sent by the Italian Art and Archives Rescue Fund to Florence to restore flood damaged paintings. His new book, "Art Restoration", will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue.

AQUATINT may be described as a process of etching used to produce a tonal texture on a metal plate which, when inked and printed on paper, appears as a tint. Unlike the more familiar line etching a wax ground is not used.

In the past the aquatint process was used principally to imitate wash drawings and watercolours rather than as a means of original, creative expression. Often the actual etching and aquatinting were carried out by craftsmen who copied the artist's original work, which may have been executed in another medium. However, an outstanding example of aquatint as a means of original expression is found in the work of Goya who, in the late eighteenth century, employed it in combination with etched line.

The French etcher, Le Prince, is generally credited with the invention of the aquatint technique in the eighteenth century. When it was introduced in England in 1775 by a well known watercolourist, Paul Sandby, it rapidly gained popularity and since that time the process has changed very little.

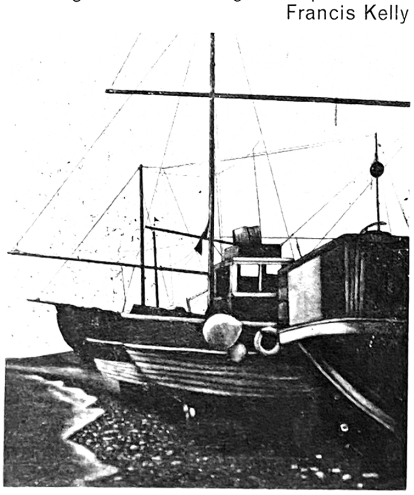
My method of using aquatint is rather different from that of most etchers who use it principally to add tone or texture to previously etched lines or intaglio work. I use the aquatint medium in a pure manner similar to the mezzotint process.

Preparation of the Plate

My way of preparing a plate for aquatinting is similar to that of other etchers. A porous ground of granulated resin particles is established through which the acid may bite many small cavities in the metal. Natural resin, such as colophony or dammar, is generally used. This is crushed to powder, evenly distributed on the plate, then carefully heated.

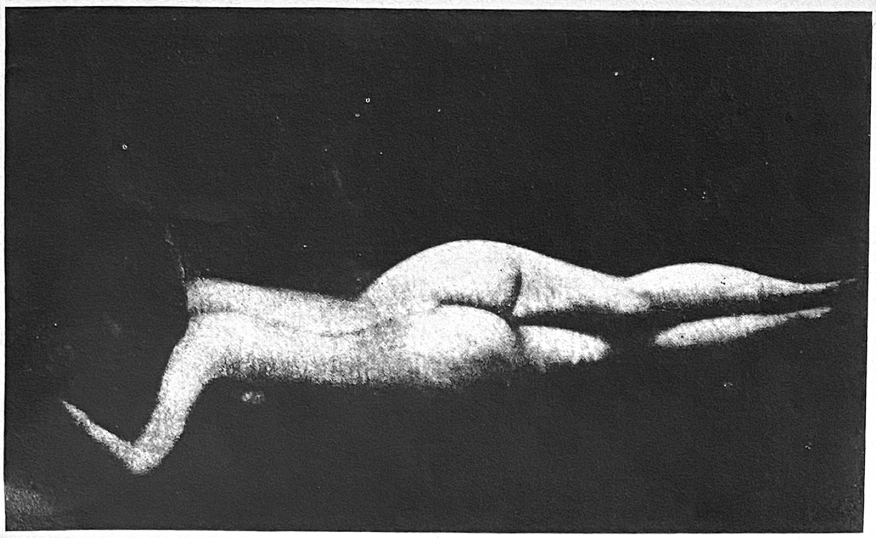
To distribute the powdered resin I use a specially constructed resin-dust box, similar in height and shape to a wardrobe, that has been fitted with a wire mesh rack to support the plate. I place the powder particles inside the box then agitate them, either with a bellows inserted through a hole in the lower portion of the box or with a movable board attached to the inside of the box. This board serves both as a paddle fan and later, when secured, as a platform on which to place the plate. After allowing a brief interval for the heavier grains of resin to settle, I place the plate inside the container on the wire mesh rack or paddle/fan shelf and close the door. Ten minutes is usually sufficient to allow the resin to cover the plate evenly like a layer of snow.

Hastings Shore: etching and aquatint Francis Kelly



Instead of an aquatint box I have successfully used a large cardboard packing case. You can create the resin powder cloud just by shaking the case or by thumping the sides of the carton. A more simple means of depositing the resin over small areas of the plate is to shake the powder from a gauze or silk bag, or to sift it through a small mesh screen. This method results in a less evenly distributed powder film than that produced by the box method, but sometimes an irregular texture may be desirable.

The amount of resin which is allowed to collect on the plate must be judged carefully. Too little resin will result in a weak



Mizzen Sail: etching and aquatint
Francis Kelly

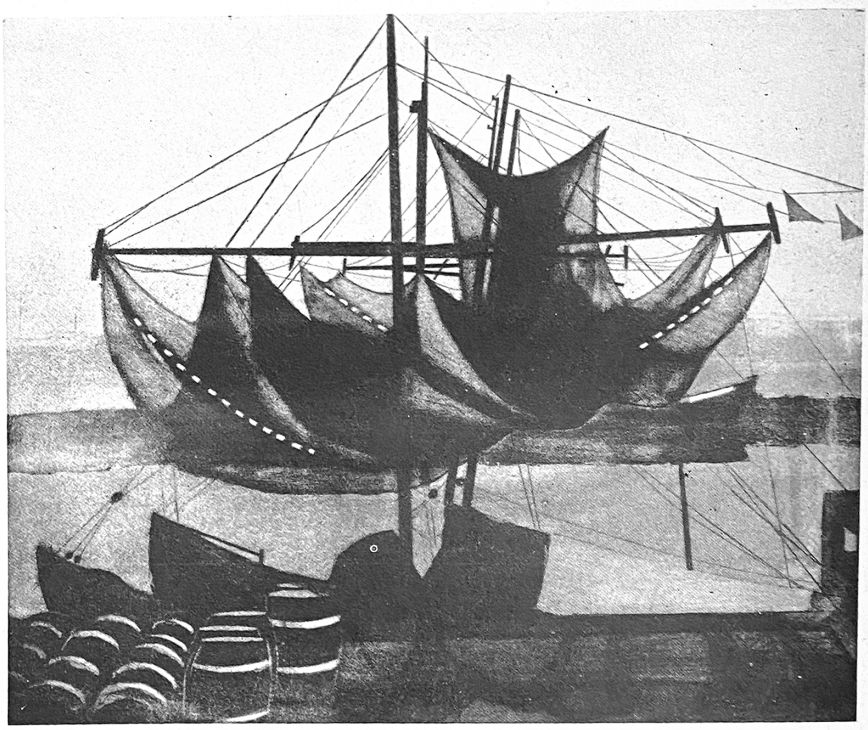
◀Repose: aquatint Francis Kelly

Herring Fleet: soft ground etching
Francis Kelly

ground that will print as a pale grey. An excessive amount will clog and melt into a solid mass when heated, preventing the acid from acting on the plate.

When the resin powder has accumulated to the desired density I remove the plate from the box, taking care to avoid jarring or knocking that would disturb the evenly dispersed powder film, and place it on a grid of crossed wires attached to a metal frame. I then pass a flame back and forth evenly beneath the wire supported plate. Wires are used as support to allow the heat to be distributed evenly throughout the entire plate. A gas torch with a burner head attached to flexible tubing connected to a gas pipe may be used to provide the flame. If a gas outlet is not available a small propane blow torch can be equally effective for heating the resin.

The purpose of heating the resin is to transform each crystal into an acid resistant barrier that adheres securely to the plate. The acid then flows into the unprotected crevices between the grains to attack the metal. These intaglio pits retain the ink after the plate surface has been wiped clean, giving the unique aquatint tone to the print.



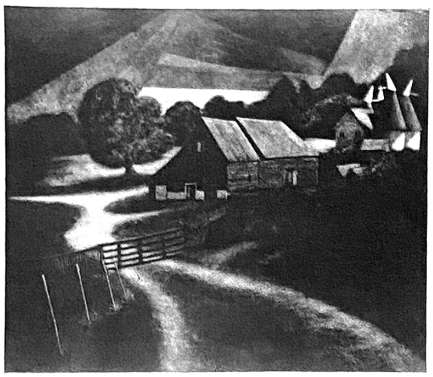
The Critical Phase

Heating the plate and melting the resin is a critical phase in the preparation of an aquatint. If the flame is applied for too long in one spot the melting resin particles will flow from their droplet state and fuse into an impervious layer. The resin should be heated just to the melting point and then the flame passed quickly along under the plate to an adjacent area.

At this point the artist may decide which areas he wishes to remain white by applying an acid-resistant varnish to the resin surface. This is referred to as "stopping out". The back of the plate should also be completely coated with this protective varnish and allowed to dry.

You can achieve a diversity of tonal contrasts by varying the length of time the metal is exposed to acid. When an initial light tone has been bitten, remove the plate from the bath, rinse it with water and dry it so that the appropriate area will be stopped out. Then re-immerse it and repeat the procedure to obtain as many shades from grey through black as you require.

My technique differs from that of most etchers. Instead of stopping out areas to form my design, I expose the whole surface of the plate to the action of the acid for a single long bite. First, I immerse the plate in a prepared bath of about eight parts water and one part nitric acid. The gas that is released causes bubbles to form on the plate. These bubbles should be brushed away with a feather, otherwise they will prevent the acid from properly biting



Kent: etching and aquatint Francis Kelly

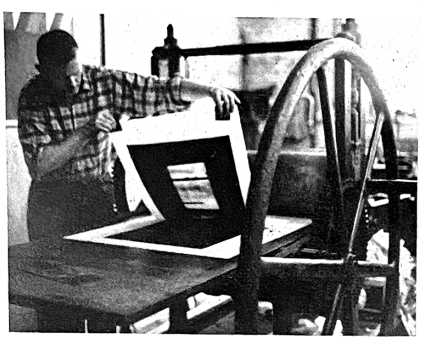
into the metal. An overall deep biting may require three to four hours of immerson, during which bubbles require feathering about every quarter of an hour to achieve the desired depth of bite. The temperature of the water and atmosphere may affect the acid's penetrating power; in the summer it will bite quickly, whereas in the winter the action is considerably slower and may require a greater proportion of acid to water. On completion of the biting phase remove the plate from the acid, wash it in water and dissolve the resin and varnish with solvents.

Copper plates bitten in hydrochloric acid, nitric acid or perchlorate of iron are usually recommended for aquatinting. I have found 18 gauge polished zinc plates bitten in nitric acid preferable for my requirements. On the occasions I have used copper, the hardness of the metal made scraping an arduous task and caused wiping canvases to tear. The greater expense of copper is unwarranted unless you wish to print a large edition that requires the durability copper affords. Steel, aluminium and various alloys have been substituted but are seldom bitten as satisfactorily by acid as copper or zinc.

After preparing the plate with an aquatint surface you may go ahead with the composition. I usually work directly on the plate, although I sometimes block in a few guide lines with chalk. My principal tool for removing bitten areas of aquatint is the *scraper*. This is a three-sided steel shaft about four inches in length, tapered to a point at the end and set into a wooden handle. I obtain graduated tonal values by varying the depth of scraping; light surface scraping produces dark greys and heavier scraping gives lighter tones, while white is achieved by completely removing the aquatint with prolonged scraping. This may be followed by polishing with a burnisher and machine oil. I take frequent trial proofs during the development of a plate to avoid overscraping.

I sometimes use a mezzotint *rocker* for adding rich velvety blacks that complement the range of values in the composition. The mezzotint rocker is made of flat, tempered steel from one to four inches in width and set in a wooden handle. The vertical grooves of the rocker form a series of uniform teeth that bite into the metal when it is "rocked" back and forth across the plate. This action produces a rough burr that readily retains the ink.

Santorini: colour aquatint Francis Kelly



Pulling a trial proof from an aquatint plate.

Scraping Aquatints

Scraping aquatints is rather an exacting procedure, as it is quite easy to remove more aquatint than anticipated and mistakes are not easily rectified. Once removed, it is difficult to repeat the same texture. I simulate the aquatint surface in small areas by employing a *roulette*, a small revolving wheel with a series of raised points, mounted in a wooden handle. When the roulette is rolled over the plate with a moderate degree of pressure, the points pierce the metal.

Liquid grounds of resin dissolved in alcohol are occasionally used. This solution is brushed or washed on the plate. After the alcohol has dried the resin grains are left adhered to the metal, then etched in acid to create aquatint tones. The disadvantage of liquid grounds is that they are difficult to control and one often needs to make repeated applications to achieve the desired texture.

You can simulate the aquatint ground over the complete area of the plate by using sandpaper and pressure. First, roll the plate with the wax ground normally used for etching. Lay sandpaper over the ground and pass the plate through a press several times, alternating the angle of the sandpaper on each occasion to multiply the number of holes pierced in the ground. Then varnish the plate on the back and place it in the acid that will bite through the sandpaper induced perforations.

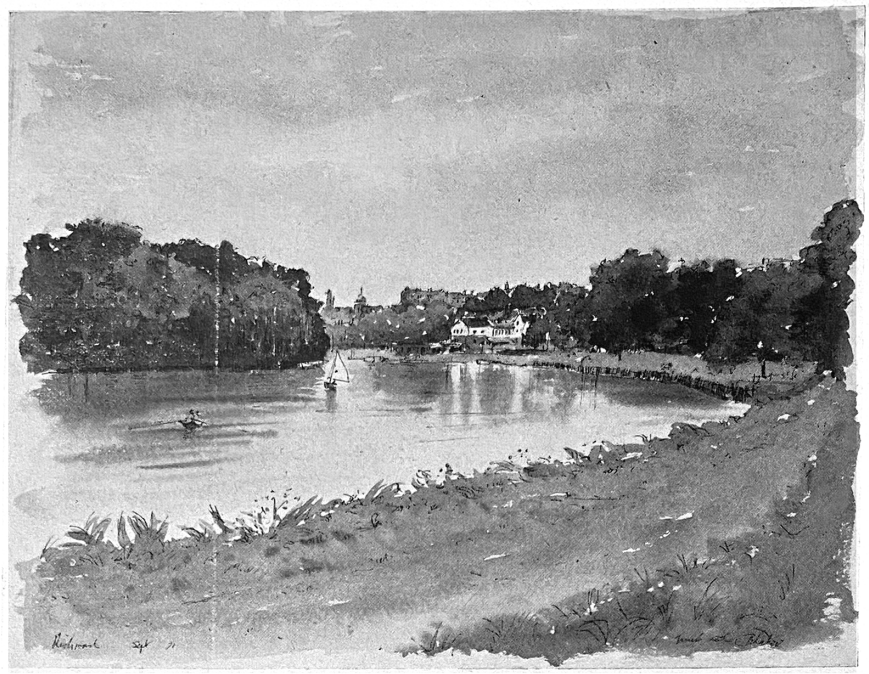
Printing the Plate

I prepare the aquatint plate for printing in the same manner as I would for any line etching or engraving. I first apply ink to the plate with a felt dabber then wipe it clean with muslin, so that the ink remains only in the bitten cavities. I place the plate on the bed of the printing press and cover it with a previously dampened paper (preferably hand-made) over which felt blankets are drawn. With a few turns of the wheel the bed and plate are passed between the two cylindrical rollers pressing the paper into the ink-filled crevices.

Once you have completed the black and white image you may start introducing colour. Some printmakers prepare a separate plate for each area of colour, others apply ink to the plate through stencils cut to the shapes of the colour areas. I use a single plate, ink individual areas with colour and then print in one run. I keep the colour proof damp while I re-ink the plate black. After wiping it, I carefully register the plate over the colour image and run it through the press again. This allows the colour to bleed through and contrast with areas of black giving an effect not unlike that of stained glass.

I generally pull a maximum limited edition of fifty numbered and signed prints, although many of my deeply bitten aquatints would take two to three hundred impressions without an obvious loss of quality.

Several noteworthy books are devoted to the technique of etching and engraving. Among those of special interest are *New Ways of Gravure* by S. W. Hayter (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1949); *Printmaking* by Gabor Peterdi (Macmillan Co., New York 1959); and *Etching, Engraving and Intaglio Printing* by Anthony Gross (Oxford University Press, London 1970). I would further recommend anyone who is interested in fine art graphic processes to visit the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and study the unique permanent display of fine art printmaking methods and equipment.



Richmond: watercolour 11 in. by 15 in. Michael Blaker

WATERCOLOUR OUT OF DOORS

Part 1: River Scenes

How many watercolourists working out of doors have ever had their peaceful view suddenly interrupted by a large motor boat racing down the river or a crowd of interested onlookers who spend the afternoon watching their every move? Michael Blaker gives an amusing glimpse of his own working habits and advice on how to approach the outdoor scene.

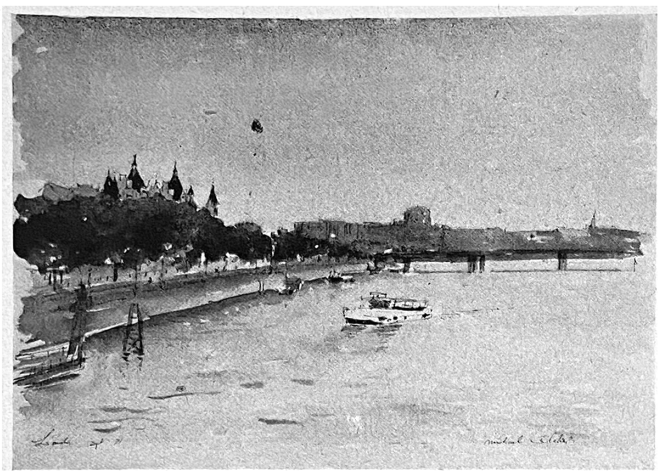
WHEN PAINTING a river subject perhaps the most interesting, and in some ways irritating, aspect of the procedure is the effect of constantly changing light on water. You may have chanced on the ideal setting; an idyllic composition of trees and reflections. You settle down to paint it and are in the process of echoing the subtle shade of a bridge or tree when the sudden appearance of a motor boat shatters every quiet reflection into a thousand shimmering shafts of light. Little wavelets and ripples continue to disturb the effect, with kaleidoscopic variation, for the next twenty minutes, during which time your subtle wash of colour has dried.

This is merely one of the hazards of watercolour or line and wash work out of doors. In some ways one should be thankful for these interruptions of life. They do not happen if you are working in the studio for an imaginative effect. Out of doors there is always something going on to remind you that life is all around, and where life abounds it finds its way into your picture. Life in a painting is the only thing that really counts in the end; without that vital ingredient the work will never hold the spectator's interest for more than a second or two. If the picture has life in it, it will give pleasure to its owner forever.

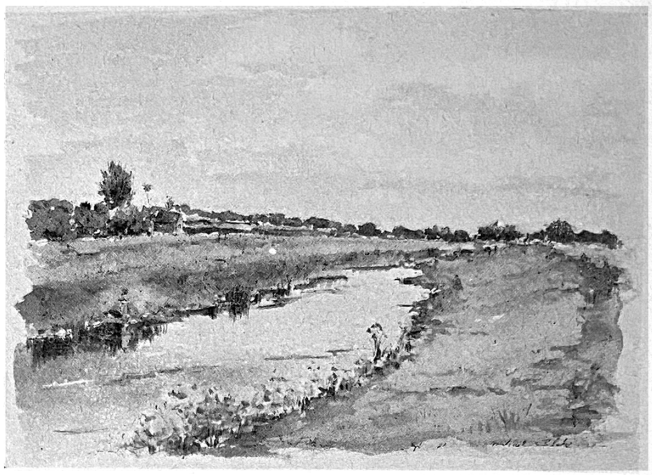
When you are out for a day's line and wash painting the first question is how to select a site. You should not be over particular about this. As one distinguished landscape painter said, if the motif in front of you is not satisfactory, try turning your back on it and painting the view that was originally behind you. Contemplating too many potential views will make you dissatisfied with them all, and you will return home eventually with nothing accomplished.

With river subjects, there are several alternatives. You may select the wild and natural aspect; the primeval effect of trees and water. Or you may decide on a scene that takes in houses, boats, bridges—anything to vary the reflections that are such an outstanding feature of this subject. The most pleasant composition is invariably one that includes a bend or turn in the river.

Ideally, the weather should be basically settled, although a few clouds certainly give relief. A pure blue sky may wink at you with vibrating warmth, but it is



London, Thames View: watercolour 11 in. by 15 in. Michael Blaker



Fittleworth: watercolour 11 in. by 15 in. Michael Blaker

artistically monotonous and difficult to represent even with a carefully gradated wash. The summer morning light, with white clouds not yet ruffled by the stronger winds of later in the day, is very satisfactory. The water generally remains about the same for a few hours and the day has a freshness that will stay long enough for you to paint it.

Watercolour vs. Line and Wash

The advantage of line and wash, as opposed to pure watercolour, is that you start with pen and ink. A few swift but accurate strokes and dots of the nib establish the position of trees and houses. Dark notes such as windows, shadows under bridges and other points also help to give the essential sparkle to the finished work. With these references already on the paper you can work away at painting in the details and masses. When painting trees, it is best to flow in the general colour and fill in the darker parts with deeper tones before the wash dries. You may, of course, put the darker parts in first and flow lighter washes over them, but in that case it is better to wait for each layer to dry before superimposing the next; otherwise your work will end up with a scrubbed and overworked look.

The best way to do reflections is to wash in the whole river and put in the reflections before the wash dries. Never continue once the easy flow of colour ceases. The object in watercolour—river scenes in particular—is to retain the freshness and flowing quality of water itself. Skies must not be overworked or the spontaneous evocation of reality is lost. If your painting dissatisfies you, put it away carefully and start another.

Never be over-critical of a painting while you are on the site. Your job as an artist needs all your attention while you are painting. You can turn critic later when the work is in a different setting such as your home or studio. You will be surprised how different it appears at a different time of day and often the effect you felt you had caught least well turns out to be the masterpiece of the collection.

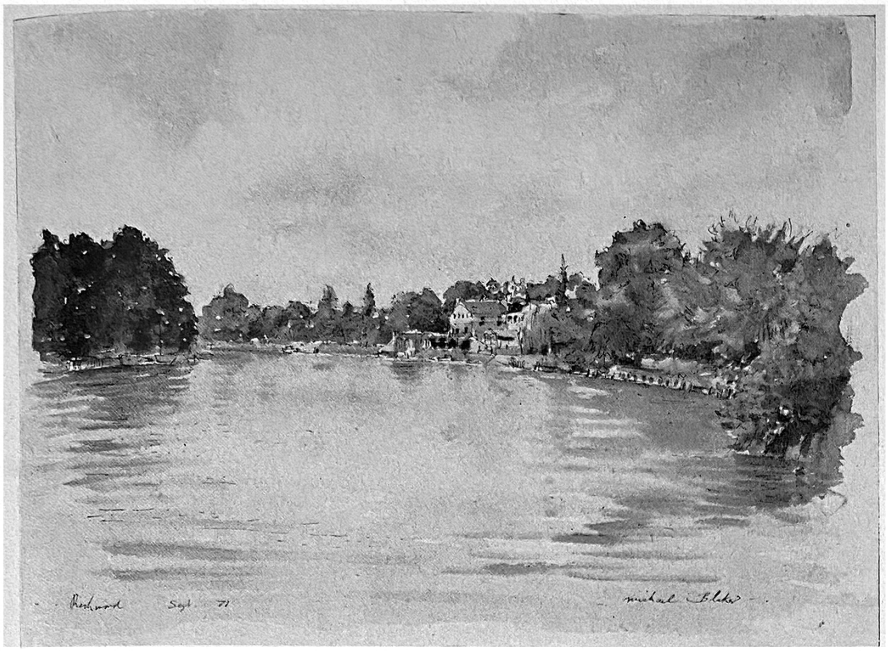
Sometimes, it is as well to do some reconnaissance work first. With my pictures of Richmond, I walked over the area first with a notebook, *not* making quick sketches—what's the use of unresolved pictorial jottings?—but writing down the location of a good effect, the time of day, direction of the wind and so on. It is often necessary to give yourself quite definite directions or you will never find a particular spot again. Then, when you wish to go out watercolouring, you can consult your notebook to find out where there is a good effect when the east wind prevails on such and such a morning, and off you go with no waste of time deciding where to paint. This is not to say that you cannot go off confident that fate will present you with an unpremeditated subject, but a notebook does give you a basis. In it you should also note the precise time of the effect you wish to capture. In this way you can get into position ready to paint when it occurs.

I find this is particularly important with sunset subjects. When I was painting Richmond there was a series of fine days all much alike, and from seven to seven-thirty p.m. there was a superb scenic effect from the bridge looking towards the White Cross Hotel. The sun had set and the afterglow was reflecting first up to the clear sky then down into the river. There were no clouds to obscure the light and colour which gave a fantastic Turnerian effect of subtle orange with green-black reflections. Noting down the time of day, I was in position half an hour before each evening, ready to work rapidly as such a subject changes very quickly. When painting sunset scenes, like the one on the cover of this issue, you must work at full speed and extremely deliberately. There is no time to lean back and consider the next step. At any moment the sun will disappear and the whole landscape will cloud over, losing colour, intensity and interest. When this happens it is no use continuing to paint in front of a changed view. The painting will go dead once the magic is off.

Sometimes it is difficult to keep this vital appointment with yourself, but nothing must be allowed to deter you. After all, you have been waiting all day for just this moment and if the weather changes it may be weeks before the same scene turns up again. The casual caller, the sudden telephone call, the invitation out to tea—all must be ruthlessly ignored. You have to be on time to anticipate your motif.

Painting in Comfort

When working out of doors it is important to be comfortable, but not so important that this necessity precludes all others. If the only way to achieve a certain vista is to stand with watercolour box and water resting on your drawing board and ink held precariously in one hand, then you must suffer the discomfort. But if at all possible, select a place to put a cushion and sit on the ground in comfort with your materials arranged around you. In this way you can spread yourself a little, and you won't knock waterpots and ink over at crucial moments. At places like Richmond, however, there is a tide. Several times I



Richmond: watercolour 11 in. by 15 in. Michael Blaker

have had to gather up my accoutrements and flee before a sudden miniature tidal wave as it raised itself above the river bank and flowed in a silvery line across the turf where I had been sitting.

The Richmond bridges give scope for a number of interesting subjects, particularly as some of them are different sizes and may be viewed through each other. I made several oil paintings and etchings of these motifs, as well as line and wash drawings. The arches are especially interesting to the line and wash artist, as the tones of their reflections are inevitably disturbed by ripples of light from small currents in the river. Anglers, small boats, posts and swans all help to fill in the detail, adding interest and variation to the theme. When putting in your first lines with the pen, you should take advantage of such gratuitous additions as a rowing-boat going by with a passenger holding a parasol, or a fisherman who has walked to the end of a jetty to cast in his line. They may not be there when you come to fill in your colour washes so put them in as they appear at that moment.

With a river scene set in the real country, as in my drawing of the river at Fittleworth, you find a different atmosphere to that of the Thames area. The river in the former setting is smaller—not wide enough to carry more than a rowing skiff or canoe—and there are no riverbuses to break up the water. The river scarcely seems to move, in fact, you find reeds, stagnant patches and slowly floating branches to portray. You can make scarcely more than a cursory indication of flowers in this style of drawing, where total effect is more important than the minute details. But it is as well to be aware of what you are painting. Just as a good portrait artist is always an expert anatomist, a good landscape painter should understand clouds and currents. He should also know the names and species of trees, flowers and plants.

In the country river scene, a single figure, such as an angler, is often sufficient to bring the picture to life. There are endless painting subjects along the river and each meandering turn of the stream reveals a new intimate corner. In the country the artist can find the same isolation as the fisherman but in town, even by the Thames, you are subjected to many disturbances.

Spectator Sport

First, laying out your colours is enough to bring a glow of interest to the lacklustre eyes of people sitting somnolently by the river. The movement of the pen now brings them closer; children pause in their games and sit behind you, creeping ever closer, until they are almost in your lap . . . hoarse breathing in your ear from somebody who is about to tell you of his uncle's artistic attempts in a similar media . . . a sudden question as you begin the sky—a moment when all interruption is fatal—"What are you painting, exactly?" You point to the shimmering view before you. "Oh!" Comprehension dawns as they look up at the view, having apparently not noticed their idyllic surroundings until now.

The watercolourist soon learns, however, to ignore all this, or to respond to it with a small part of his mind and attention without ceasing his steady work at the picture in hand. Sometimes, in fact, you can carry on a continuous conversation at the same time—provided it is about the painting, the scenery or the technique you are employing. Any attempts to lead you into other topics must be ignored. You simply don't answer. An artist at work is under no social obligation, except that of politeness. You must be civil but detached, retaining a king of dual image, that of God and a Chinaman. You are god-like in your character as supreme creator (for that moment) and Chinese in the detachment, sureness and economy of your brushwork.

When you have finished, you can turn and look at the owners of the voices that have been plaguing you. Never turn your head to look at them while painting. You must keep your eyes on your picture and motif. There are occasions, however, when interruptions become almost unbearable. There are the gangs of youths who want to goad you into noticing them and will go so far as to kick over your waterpot. The solution here is to divide them somehow by making a friend of one of them. This can be done by actually turning to look at him and asking him if he's ever painted. He will immediately crouch down, become an ally and tell you of his attempts to paint at school. He will also keep the others at bay. You can make him responsible for ordering them back, so they won't cast shadows across your work. All this, however, can be somewhat exhausting. It is better to avoid populated places on a Saturday afternoon.

While painting my view of London with the riverbus coming (a fortunate addition that appeared at exactly the right moment) I was suddenly surrounded by a party of tourists with cameras who photographed me from all angles, regarding my artistic presence as a mere model for their own art. Such disturbances must never be allowed to put you off however. I was in two minds about commencing this London view as the sky was grey and dull and there seemed to be very little of colour or interest there. On looking at it in the studio, though, away from the time and place, the very absence of colour had produced a muted grey effect that had something of the understatement of an oriental drawing. I think this shows that any scene will suffice for a watercolour or line and wash drawing. The important point is actually to *begin* and this, curiously enough, is often the hardest part.***

DRAWING AND PAINTING ABROAD

PART I

By Ken Howard

Students often find drawing on holiday unsatisfying and start painting straight away. This frustration is usually just a question of having the wrong materials to begin with. In this first of two articles, Ken Howard gives tips on what to take with you and how to organize yourself if your luggage is restricted.

WITH THE approach of summer many of you will be planning trips abroad, either with the express idea of getting some painting done or alternatively to do some drawing during a holiday with the family.

There are many advantages to working in a foreign country. It introduces us to a whole new range of colour, shape and atmosphere—but also it makes us see our own normal environment with a fresh awareness. Just as we realize with a shock how cold it is in England when we step off the plane in a southern country, we also see how beautifully subtle and full of atmosphere it is in England after the strong, clear light of the Mediterranean countries.

Having said this, however, it is my intention in these two articles to concentrate on some of the preparations for—and practical problems involved—in drawing and painting abroad. If you are limited in the amount of time you will be able to spend working due to family commitments, I think it best to attempt only to draw, and maybe work in gouache or watercolour while you are away. If, on the other hand, you have many private hours to work several canvases may be possible.

First, let us consider drawing and the materials you will need. Most important, what will you carry them in when travelling? Unless you are going by car and can take what you like (and very often even by car this is not possible), travelling by train and air obviously restricts you somewhat in the amount of materials you can take.

Most colourmen now supply excellent sketching satchels that are large enough to contain everything you will need. Like a school satchel these satchels consist of a deep inside pocket that will take your drawing board, paper and sketchbook, and two outside pockets that will hold all your drawing materials. If you cannot afford to spend too much, then an ex-army canvas knapsack and shoulder strap is perfectly adequate. Its one drawback is that it will limit the size of your drawing board, although if you only intend taking a sketchbook this is no problem.

Sunrise in the Village: oil 20 in. by 24 in. Ken Howard

By kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. H. Cooper

When drawing, particularly in a hot country, you often need to sit down while working as a drawing board and materials are difficult to control standing up. You can often find a wall or a step, but this can affect the composition you choose in a detrimental way. For this reason a small sketching stool is a necessary part of your equipment. I find the tripod type of stool the ideal one. It is a convenient height and fits compactly on to the side of your sketching satchel or knapsack. I find it does not induce cramp in the way that some of the latest aluminium ones do. Unfortunately these tripod stools are sometimes difficult to find, but George Rowney and Co. Ltd.'s shop in Percy Street, London W.1, usually have them in stock.

In my experience, students prefer to paint rather than draw because they feel that drawing restricts them. This is because they seldom have adequate materials. The result is that when they start to draw something that contains broad acres of tone they find themselves equipped only with a pencil or, even more restricting, with a pen. They quickly become demoralized with their efforts in a way that seldom happens when they use paint.

Drawing is the basis of all visual expression, whether you are dealing with painting, print making or sculpture, so we must encourage ourselves to draw whenever possible. Good materials are essential for this. Don't have your materials spilling all over the place in your bag, because they will quickly become ruined and you will find yourself returning to the good old stand-by, the pencil. I am not saying that the best materials will necessarily make the best draughtsman, but bad materials will hinder the best of draughtsmen and make full expression very difficult to attain. The answer I find is to keep two good wooden cigar boxes in your sketching bag with all your materials in them.

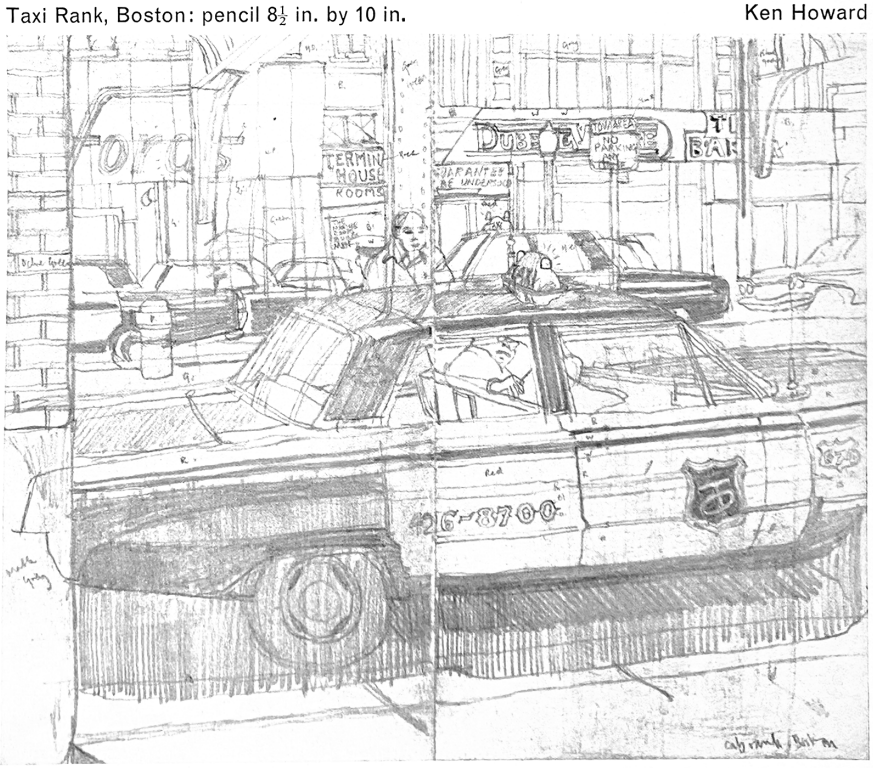
The following are some of the materials I would suggest: HB, B and 2B pencils—and not little stumps that should have been thrown away long ago, but good long pencils that will give you control and consequently freedom in your drawing. A charcoal pencil is better than stick charcoal for sketching as it is cleaner and when working in a hot country you don't want to get covered with charcoal dust. A box of conté chalk, or, ideally, conté pencils in sepia or sienna will add to the range of your drawing. I am always a little wary of attractive materials. You are liable to be satisfied with a drawing because it looks attractive and not question it further than that. If you accept this danger, however, coloured conté chalk can be very useful.

There is a whole range of pens to choose from, but I find I carry two pens in my equipment: a fountain pen, well broken in and flexible—which is invaluable when drawing in a situation where it is impossible to get out a bottle of ink—and a normal steel pen, ideally a Gillott 303 nib and holder. If you work with one of these, always make sure you have an adequate supply of spare nibs as the beauty of the normal steel pen is the flexibility and flow. Once you have leaned on a pen nib several times it loses the full range of lines it is possible to make. These are the only two pens I would carry even though I advise using a pen as your basic drawing implement rather than a pencil. Some of you may like to draw with a felt pen or Biro and this is something you must decide for yourselves. Your choice will depend on your own style of drawing, but it is the precision and positive nature of the pen mark that is its great value. Biros and felt pens are inclined to be less controllable and once again will produce a somewhat flattering effect which I think is dangerous.

A bottle of black or sepia ink is also necessary. If you are limited by space and weight then black fountain pen ink is best as it can be used both in the filler pen and with the normal steel pen with other equipment. But make sure it is *black* ink and not

On the Plane: pencil 8½ in. by 10 in. Ken Howard

Taxi Rank, Boston: pencil 8½ in. by 10 in. Ken Howard



Tuscan Farmhouse: gouache 10 in. by 12 in. Ken Howard

blue-black. When you water down blue-black it becomes very blue, which is somewhat disturbing in a drawing if you do not wish it to be read as a colour. The drawback with Indian ink is that it doesn't thin very well for washes unless you use distilled water. From this point of view, Rotring Black is the best, but do not use it in your fountain pen. For line drawing with a steel pen, I find Rowney's "Kandahar" sepia tint is ideal.

In addition to your bottle of ink, also carry a bottle of watered-down ink for wash drawing. For convenience, when working, it is an idea to fix the two bottles together with gum strip, so that they can easily be held as one unit. Although I have talked about conté and charcoal, I find the ink wash is the best medium to use when sketching. It is rapid, precise and permanent. It is also economical on space since, if you have the dry media mentioned already, a very necessary part of your equipment must be fixative and a spray to preserve your drawing.

This brings us to brushes. When working with pen and wash a good resilient sable is absolutely necessary. A number 6 will probably fulfil all your needs, but if you want to equip yourself with more than one, then I would advise a number 4 and a number 10. This will be the most expensive single item you buy and I fear there is no way of avoiding it, so make sure you look after your sable brushes. Never carry them loose or they will very quickly resemble those sweeps' brushes we used to see sticking out of chimneys. Either make sure they always have a plastic cover over them (which is supplied by the retailer with all good sable brushes), or make yourself a simple brush container. Cut a piece of corrugated card slightly longer than your brushes and wide enough to take as many brushes as you have. Lay the brushes in the corrugated sections and roll up the card with an elastic band around it.

The drawing board in your bag should be the same size as the bag—which will give it support—and it should be as light as possible. A good piece of plywood makes a very adequate drawing board and it can be cut exactly to size. Always make sure you have enough pins or clips in your bag.

Finally, add a small medicine bottle of water, preferably distilled; a saucer or small paintbox if you wish to arrive at more subtle wash effects than you can with a bottle of watered-down ink only; a small jam jar or container, and last, but not least, a good piece of clean absorbent rag.

I have tried to cover the basic equipment you will need if you seriously mean to make drawings when you are abroad this year. Paper and/or a good spiral board sketchbook should be added. In a relatively compact piece of luggage you should be adequately equipped for your needs. Then the hard part begins.***

THE CITY ART GALLERY BRISTOL

Weston Sands — W. Hopkins and E. Howell

All photographs by courtesy of the Bristol Art Gallery.

In this second article on Art Galleries in Britain, Bernard Dunstan recalls his long friendship with the City Art Gallery in Bristol. Local pride in their history is reflected in this gallery's enthusiasm for the work of local artists. Although they may be forgotten now, these little-known pictures often give just as valuable an insight into a past way of life as the many paintings by famous names that have also found a home in the Bristol Art Gallery.

BRISTOL has one of the most attractive medium-sized galleries outside London, and one of the admirable things about it is the variety it contains. The gallery combines a strong local flavour, both in its pictures and in other subjects, with a collection of paintings of international standing. You can see, for instance, one of the finest of Courbet's seascapes, and a few steps further on come across modest but charming topographical paintings showing exactly what Bristol looked like in the early 19th century.

This local flavour is very typical of Bristol, a city of great local patriotism, self-confidence and self-awareness. I lived and worked there for some years, and I have never known any other town so vigorously aware of its own history and traditions, not to mention its own eccentricities. Its inhabitants are very conscious of being Bristolians, and they sometimes talk of the slave trade which built up the fortunes of the city as if it happened yesterday. They are proud, too, of having a local pronunciation with a distinctive flavour, even though you may not often nowadays hear people talking of the "Victorial Rooms", or saying "ideal" for "idea". The Bristolian's local pride is wholly justified by the great beauty and variety of the city itself, in spite of the recent depredations by road planners and modern architects, who have left far worse scars on it than Hitler ever managed to. Unfortunately, as in the case of London, the University is one of the worst offenders, with its loutish blocks visible for miles around on the top of the hill, and the unbelievably appalling Union building within a few minutes of the Art Gallery.

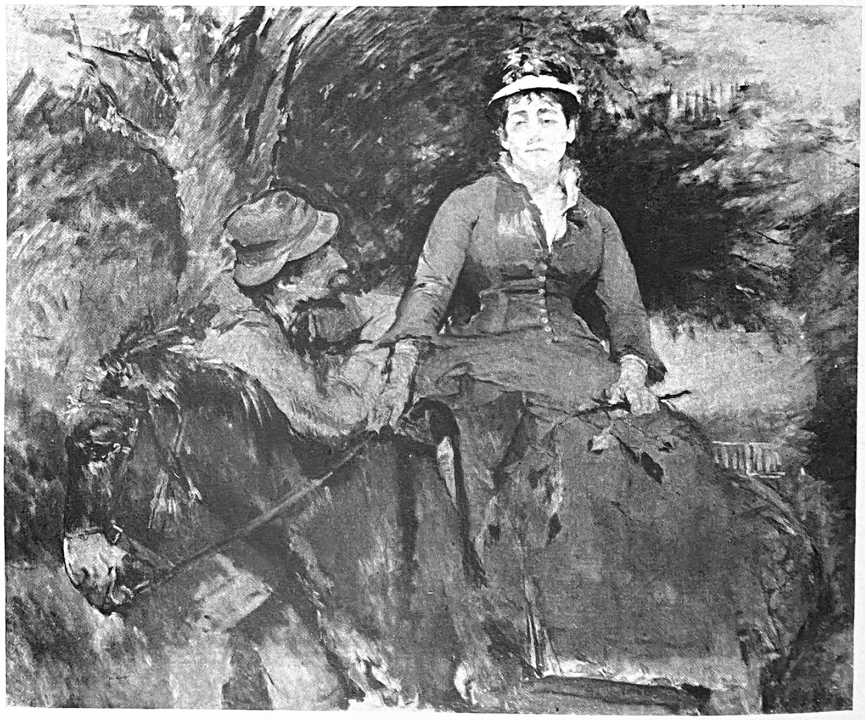
But there are still the charming crescents and terraces of Clifton, the grandeur of the Avon Gorge, and the undiminished attraction of a city built on a hill, whose steepness sometimes gives it the scale and the richness in texture of an Italian or French hill town. (The local driving, too, is often Italian in its ferocity.) On top of it all is the suspension bridge, Brunel's masterpiece and a great work of art/engineering of the nineteenth century, striding across the Gorge with a spring, a vigour and a grace which acts as a continual lift of the heart to anyone lucky enough to live near it.

At the top of Park Street, which must be the steepest main shopping street in the country—I remember buses being unable to get up it at all in severe winter weather—you will find another Bristol landmark, the elegant Victorian Gothic tower of the University. I forbear from making any comparisons, and merely direct you next door to where the Art Gallery and Museum sits alongside it with a certain comfortable solidity which seems to welcome one in. Bristol is a rich city, and vast amounts of money, both for the buildings and for the collections, have been generously given over the years by the Wills family, among other benefactors.

All this, plus intelligent buying, bequests and help from other funds, including an active organization of Friends of the Art Gallery, has meant many notable additions to the collection in recent years. The paintings, for instance, by Seurat, Boudin, Delacroix, Vuillard, Gros, Sickert, Gilman and Redon have all been added to the collection since 1960. It will be seen that this list places some emphasis on pictures of the French school, but the Bristol collection is in fact a well-balanced one and ranges from a Giovanni Bellini panel to modern English and American canvases; among which I may briefly mention Gilman's portrait of his mother and an interesting early Clausen drawing of a boy. Still, there is no point in every gallery's

Portrait of Madame Bruyère Baron Gros

L'Eternité Courbet ▶



Below right: The Donkey Ride
Eva Gonzales

trying to have an equally representative collection, all showing similar examples of every school of painting; it is the particular local emphasis which gives every collection its flavour, and at Bristol I tend to go to the French paintings and to certain 19th century English ones.

The Age of Femininity

One of my favourite French pictures in the gallery is Baron Gros' portrait of Mme Bruyère, which found its home here as late as 1967. Gros is probably not a name that comes to most people's minds when they think of the French portrait. He is better known for his large battlepieces celebrating Napoleon's campaigns, which make many visitors to the Louvre hasten their steps; but he was the pupil of David, who painted some of the greatest portraits in the French tradition, and this one was, in fact, painted a few years before David's Mme Récamier.

Gros admired Rubens as well as classical and neo-classical models, and I think that some of the fullness of drawing in this fine portrait owes something to the Flemish master. Mme Bruyère looks an ideal model; how Gros must have enjoyed those plump, full forms, the charming round face with its large eyes and small, slightly pursed mouth, and above all those superb and monumental arms. Mme Bruyère's hair, with its loose and carefully disarranged ringlets and flowing, rhythmic movement, confirms me in my opinion that the Directoire style was just about the most attractive feminine fashion ever.

I have already mentioned the Courbet seascape, called *L'Eternité,* a painting of haunting and unexpected colour. Courbet was in the habit of working over a black, or at any rate a very dark, ground when painting subjects like this; through the touches and smears of solid pigment, often applied with a knife, one can still see hints of this dark canvas. By the way, a companion seapiece to this one hangs in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Eva Gonzales' *The Donkey Ride* is a real rarity. I have chosen to reproduce it

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PAINTING THE NUDE

Part 3: Perspective

How do you establish the vanishing point in relation to the various objects in your picture and where is the eye level horizon? These are essential questions for the student who wishes to master figure painting. Here Julian Melgrave gives some lively and entertaining answers.

WHEN WE THINK of perspective an image leaps at once to our minds of railway tracks disappearing endlessly into the remote distance like something out of Canaletto or Salvador Dali.

The Italians of the early 15th century were fascinated by the mathematical wizardry of such a beautiful formula as their *costruzione legittima*. Yet how can a system so suited to the portrayal of streets and buildings disappearing into the distance be of use to the figure painter?

There are two aspects of great importance. The more obvious is the question of composition (referred to in my second article), relating to (a) backgrounds—or the presence of other objects—and (b) the presence of other figures.

Backgrounds

Let us forget straightaway the backgrounds of Dali and Delvaux. We are unlikely to paint a nude in a street scene. We may have a bed, a sofa, a chair or part of a room instead.

Our nude lady (or gentleman) may be painted in a vacuum—and often is—but frequently we like to give some kind of spatial positioning. This can be done with just a few lines to give a suggestion of the setting, but unless we *know* enough to do an exhaustive delineation of the perspective lines of the room or piece of furniture, there is always the danger that our sketched in lines might be unconvincing and therefore best left out.

At its most elementary, there is one line that must be correct *even if it is not drawn in.* Whether our nude is standing on a cliff, hanging from the chandelier or standing in the centre of the carpet, we must know where our eye level horizon intersects or otherwise stands in relation to the figure. Thus, if we lie on the floor (not recommended!) the eye line is precisely at foot level and all else falls into a quadrant fanning out from our position.

Now, after establishing as much as possible, try to find your vanishing point with regard to the bed, chair, carpet and so on. This is not easy as the vanishing point or points will almost certainly lie well off the canvas. However, failure to establish this can render the entire painting unconvincing.

In figure drawing it is important for your model to appear held down by the force of gravity in a natural manner. Too geometrical an approach may end up with your failing to take account of the "give" of the upholstery and the distribution of body's weight in that give. From this it is not difficult to see why the professional artist traditionally sets his model on a dais.

Always be conscious of the source of sources of light. If there are several, watch the main one. Shadows will fall from your model and also around or more particularly behind her in the middle ground. Where they can be used to indicate the perspective lines they will help in the main task of anchoring your model with some semblance of reality.

My illustration *Kneeling Figure* may help to demonstrate some of the points I have made. Note that what at first might appear to be distortion in the back wall in fact helps to establish the flatness of the floor and the model's weight totally and properly supported by it.

Kneeling figure: conté crayon 60 in. by 48 in. Julian Melgrave

Jazz Scene oil: 48 in. by 60 in. Julian Melgrave

Girl asleep in an armchair: oil 25 in. by 30 in.

Julian Melgrave

Receding figures

Receding figures follow the laws of perspective in a more obvious and calculable way. The sleepers on the railway line and the telegraph poles alongside are familiar images in any book on perspective. Those nearer are larger. Those receding into the distance become smaller and smaller. If evenly spaced in reality they will appear to become increasingly close as they approach vanishing point.

People do not normally arrange themselves in a straight line, nor do they tend to be equally spaced, but the basic rule is good for a guideline. Remember, of course, that you can move any figure laterally out of his position to get a more realistic composition. Remember, too, that it is less natural to have figures standing clear of each other in a group. Most often they will overlap each other as we give them, although either heads or feet will be on different levels (depending on whether we view them from a point above or below midriff). Here again, shadows will possibly help to establish relative positions and to gain solidity of composition.

Two points often overlooked by beginners are worth noting. Although we know that width as well as height diminshes towards the distance in the case of telegraph poles, all beginners forget it in figure painting. It has been my good fortune to see two great paintings of Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette* at the Louvre and *Luncheon of the Boating Party* at the Phillips Gallery in Washington. Incidentally, if today's painters of stripes, blobs and optical illusions have ever told you that the camera had replaced representational painting, look first at reproductions of these famous paintings and afterwards at the originals, painted a hundred years ago. Then you will know otherwise.

Look at the sizes of the heads in these pictures. Unless you have studied them before, it is possible that this could be a great revelation to you as it was to me when I first saw them. The sizes diminish dramatically and that is the most important factor I think in holding the picture together.

After that accolade, I hope it will not be too much of an anticlimax to illustrate my point with a group scene of my own called *Jazz Scene*.

Remember, too, that size is not the only thing that diminishes. In monotone, your blacks and whites will become less defined.

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BETWEEN THE EYE AND THE HAND

You must visualize what you want to draw with great clarity before you can draw it successfully, says Peter Garrard.

FOR QUITE a long while in these articles I have concentrated on drawing more than anything else. This is not because I think drawing is the only thing that matters to a beginner, but because I have found that most beginners seem to start by drawing. I hope I have not over-emphasized drawing to the extent that anyone reading the articles would think that you must learn to draw before you can paint. On the contrary it is most sensible for any beginner to do some painting very early on because this stops drawing becoming the be-all and end-all of your art.

Drawing is only one element that you must master if you want to be an artist. Colour relationships, tonal relationships, composition and design are equally important and I do mean equally. These are the means by which you convey your idea; they are some of the tools at your disposal. They are not—at least for the majority—the idea itself.

I cannot emphasize this last point enough. One of the amateur painter's most common faults is his apparent belief that if he can learn the skills he will be able to put down his ideas.

In my last article I mentioned that skill is important and defined it as an ability to put down precisely the kind of mark that will best explain your idea. I thought it would be useful if I said a little more about skill here.

I have stated that a pursuit of skill for its own sake is not useful to you because you end up being able to put down a certain kind of mark quite well, but without being able to evaluate its usefulness. What you have to learn is skill at thinking.

I believe that if I think well, I can draw well. I am only too aware that there is, at times, a failure of communication between the brain and the hand. So often a student says, "I know what I want to put down, I can see the model quite clearly, but I cannot put it down on paper." Here the student maintains that he understands but has not enough skill to put the correct marks down. I do not believe this is an accurate statement of the facts even though most students believe it to be so. It is a failure to think clearly about what is in front of you; a failure to "see".

The Visual Aspect

When I first began to write these articles I was given helpful advice by a number of friends. One in particular told me to keep off the jargon words like "see" because every writer on art uses them all the time and as far as he was concerned they meant nothing at all. Artists tend to invest the word with a very special meaning—probably "understand" approaches their meaning more accurately, but they wish to emphasize the visual aspect of it. I am using it to mean that you should visualize the objects which you wish to draw in your mind with great clarity.

Knight in Armour by Dürer Size 16¾ in. by 12⅞ in. Suggested retail price £1·83.
By courtesy of the Medici Society Ltd., London.

To return to the unfortunate student I have just mentioned, his failure is not one of manual dexterity but of clear thinking. It is greater clarity of thinking in a visual way that the student needs, not more practice at making clever marks.

I have found that I draw best when I become so involved with the idea I am trying to put down that I forget about the marks I make. I am concentrating very hard and it is this ability to concentrate completely that the beginner lacks. What he has to do is improve his ability to concentrate. Be skilful at this. The marks will follow, and they will describe what you want. Concentration on the marks themselves will not make you draw better.

Having read to this point perhaps some of you may remember that I have been advocating that you should consciously try to draw in different styles with different marks each time. What I mean by this is that one particular style will not help in another context, such as when you make one drawing about shapes and another about tone. In a way I have been attempting to undermine your faith in any one style to make you see what drawing is about.

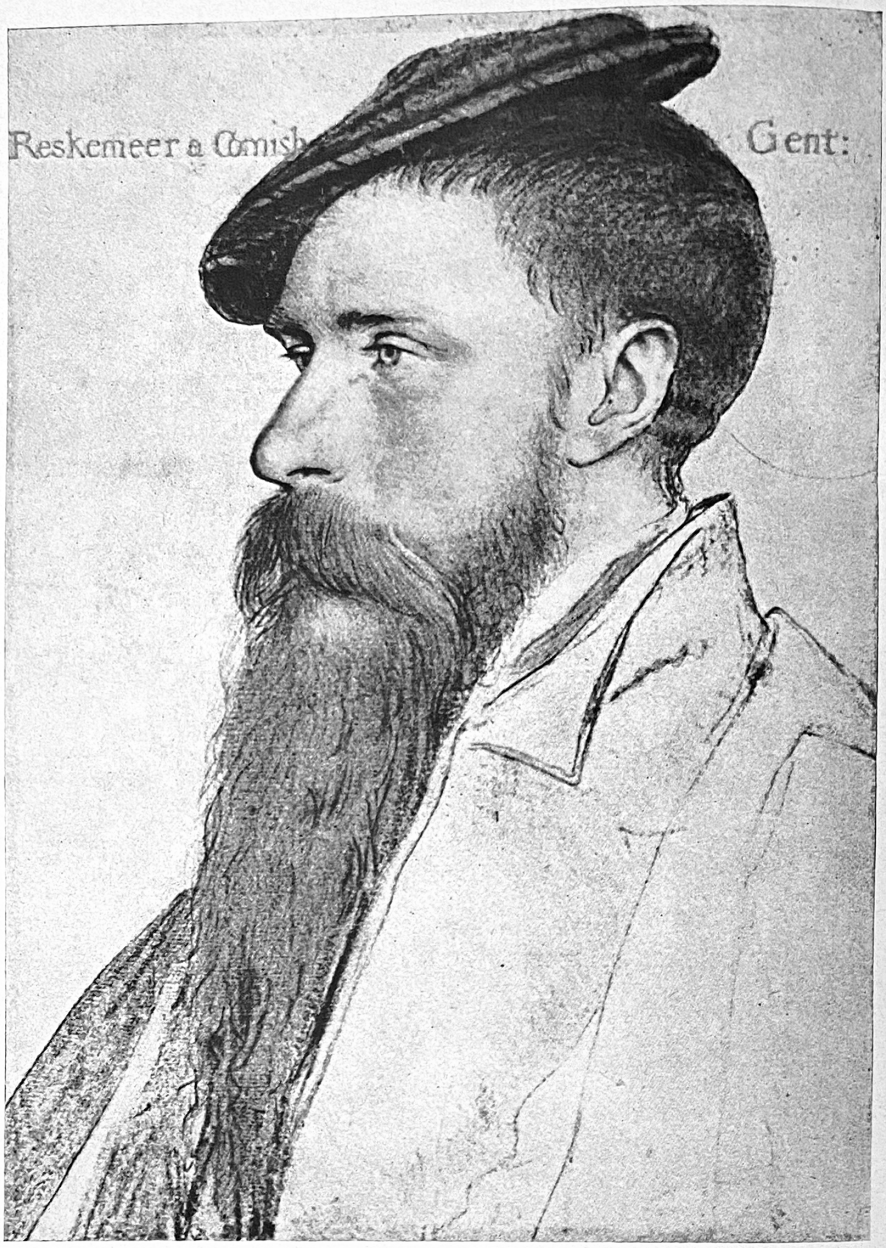
In the last two months I have criticized some work, hung one exhibition and opened another—all by groups of amateur painters. During the same two months I have also taken part in a series of seminars with fourth year students at an art school. The quality that the amateur sought was expertise, the quality that the student

sought was analytical understanding. The amateur hoped that by learning the "tricks of the trade" he would find something to say; the students, through careful concentration on one facet, hoped they would describe something worthwhile. The two positions seem very similar, though the work was vastly different. Both groups hoped that "art" would appear—indeed some were quite sure it had. Both groups were far too concerned with the kinds of marks they made in their chosen field to leave any room for an idea to creep through.

In case depression sets in I hasten to add that I saw many good paintings by amateurs and quite a number of good drawings. They were done in widely differing styles but they always had a clear idea that they wanted to express. What of the people who have no clear idea or who are too diffident as beginners to think of putting it down? They will, in fact, form the majority of students. I need hardly add here that the beginner's job is to study objectively; to look as carefully as he can at every object. In fact, one of the joys of being a beginner is your first awareness of what an object is like.

I take for granted your interest in art, so I would suggest that you try to draw in as many styles as you can, looking at the different qualities that a series of objects can have. Draw as simply as you can and draw the same objects several times. Gradually (very gradually for some) you will find that one particular aspect interests you more than another and if you are lucky you may even find that you discover what is important about the object in front of you.

The difficulty for me as a teacher is the fact that I want every beginner to put down what he thinks and at the same time I am quite aware that he needs a lot of training in styles. I want him to get away from what he thinks drawing is about now —as opposed to what he was taught at school.



Reskemeer by Holbein. Size 11⅜ in. by 8⅛ in. Suggested retail price 61p.
By courtesy of the Medici Society Ltd, London.

Better Concentration

I have often written about the importance of concentration and of learning to concentrate better, but I have not explained precisely what I mean. Since better concentration is the point of this article, I would like to do so now.

Anyone who draws knows how the mind wanders away from the subject at hand; instead of drawing the rather boring group of easels in front of you, you savour again yesterday's gargantuan lunch or tomorrow's special date. Sometimes you whisper to your neighbour or are distracted by the chattering of those at the back or the drone of the instructor's voice as he talks to someone else. Perhaps you are tired after a hard day's work and what you are doing seems so unsatisfactory that you do not know what to do, except perhaps start again or go home.

Try to give yourself a little push, talk to yourself about the drawing, ask yourself whether the line you have just put down is really going in the direction you have indicated. All of us have distractions and beginners have greater difficulty in coping with them than the rest of us. Better concentration is a matter of practice. If you can push yourself a little further each time you will be astonished at how quickly you begin to run out of time and want to go on working longer. If you could assemble a group of instructors with very opposed ideas to draw together (God forbid such an exercise), one thing they would have in common is an ability to work on a problem, to concentrate on it for a longer period than you. This is the skill you need to acquire above all others. In a future article I will discuss some drawings in detail to clarify the points I have made.

MONTHLY PAINTING COMPETITION

Reviewed by Bernard Dunstan, R.A.

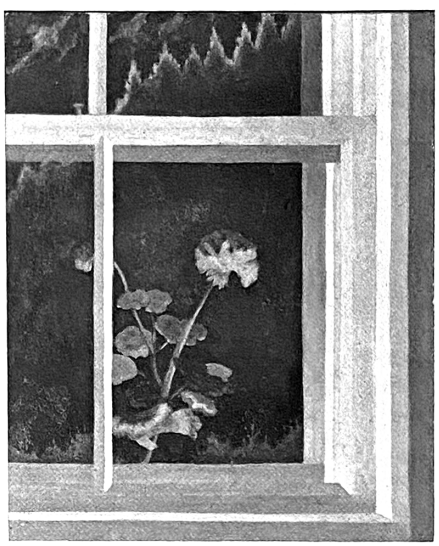
The three pictures I have chosen this month have little in common except a complete lack of pretentiousness and a straightforward, independent way of looking at things. All three of them have shapes and areas of paint that have been put down clearly, without any tricks or formulae, and in all of them the picture surface has been handled from corner to corner, so to speak, in a consistent way. They do not depend on "handwriting" or variety of touch.

"Geranium in a Window" by G. E. Mackell

Miss Mackell's painting of a geranium seen through a sash window is an immediately attractive idea, with its clear geometric shapes and its strong sense of light. It is also rather original; I can't remember ever seeing a painting made out of quite this material before. The contrast between interior light and outside darkness is always a fascinating one.

This is also a painting in which the quality of surface is kept consistent and unrhetorical all over the picture. It is quiet and without bombast. It would, in fact, be pretty difficult to do a window frame any other way. What frightful difficulties these straight edges and regular frameworks can get us into! The use of a straight-edge can lead to an unpleasantly rigid look, and any shakiness is immediately apparent. The difficulties have been well surmounted here, even if I am still puzzling over the exact construction of this particular sash window. It is convincing enough, however, largely owing to the very sure sense of tone that is shown here.

One of the best bits of painting in the picture is the actual flower of the geranium. This has a genuinely luminous glow, and is a rich deep red. I think that the colour has probably been glazed over a light underpainting to produce just this luminosity—I don't think it could have been managed any other way, and the rich texture of the paint confirms me in this. The strong light, casting definite and rich shadows on the flower and the leaves, is also very well seen. The only part of the picture that I am not happy with is the upper pane of the window, and the odd things that occur in it. Is that jagged line the top of a row of trees? If so, I am a little surprised that the colour of the trees further down should be so very blue, while the sky is an almost greenish-grey (a rather beautiful colour, I should add).



First prize winner

Geranium in a Window G. E. Mackell

"Balmoral Castle" by Jennie Lynn

THE LANDSCAPE of Balmoral, by Mrs Lynn, is the odd man out of these three because it represents a comparatively naïve or primitive approach. It makes the other two seem quite sophisticated in their straightforward way.

Let me say at once that I chose it both because I liked it as a painting, and also because I think that there are lessons to be learnt from it. A picture such as this has something of a heraldic quality. Like a flag or a banner, the elements of which it is composed are laid out across the surface so that each can be recognized separately. Everything, so to speak, has a name. Thus the paths, flower beds, castle, and greenhouse are placed as if on a map, the castle in the middle and the ornamental paths lined up in front.

You will find exactly the same sort of thing going on in a primitive Italian painting. Fields are painted field-colour, hills are hill-colour. Buildings are painted in the same way in primitive paintings of all periods—from Italian 14th and 15th century to 19th century American primitives and to naïve painters of our own time.

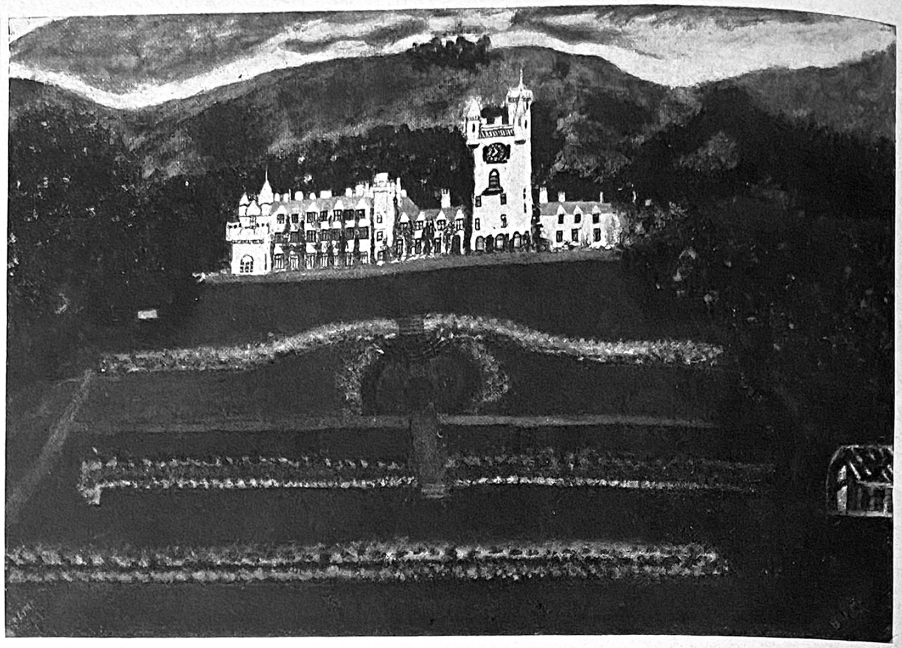
This sort of painting, then, is universal. I said that we can always learn something from a successful example of primitive painting, and I think that it is something which is in danger of being forgotten about in the effort to get things as "real" as possible, or as much like some pictorial convention (like Impressionism) as possible. This is the value of flat shapes, and the way that they divide the picture surface. Look at the stripes created here by the pattern of paths and flower beds, and the large, dark shape made by the tree at the left. Many more technically assured paintings would be improved by some big, clear divisions like this. I also like in this picture the very solid quality of the paint on the building itself, which has a rich and liquid feel to it. In other parts of the picture the surface looks unnecessarily starved, and I think this is due to the rough side of the hardboard having too obtrusive a texture. You would have to paint the whole panel as thickly as the house in order to subdue this texture. I would suggest to Mrs Lynn that if she uses a more attractive surface she will find the whole picture gets off to a better start. Why not either prime more thickly, or stick a piece of fine cotton or other material down over the rough surface of the board before priming?

"Hay Bales" by F. Sinclair

The small harvest scene by Mr Sinclair called *Hay Bales* is extremely well handled. With regard to the subject of hardboard, I might point out that this panel is painted straight on to the warm dark brown colour

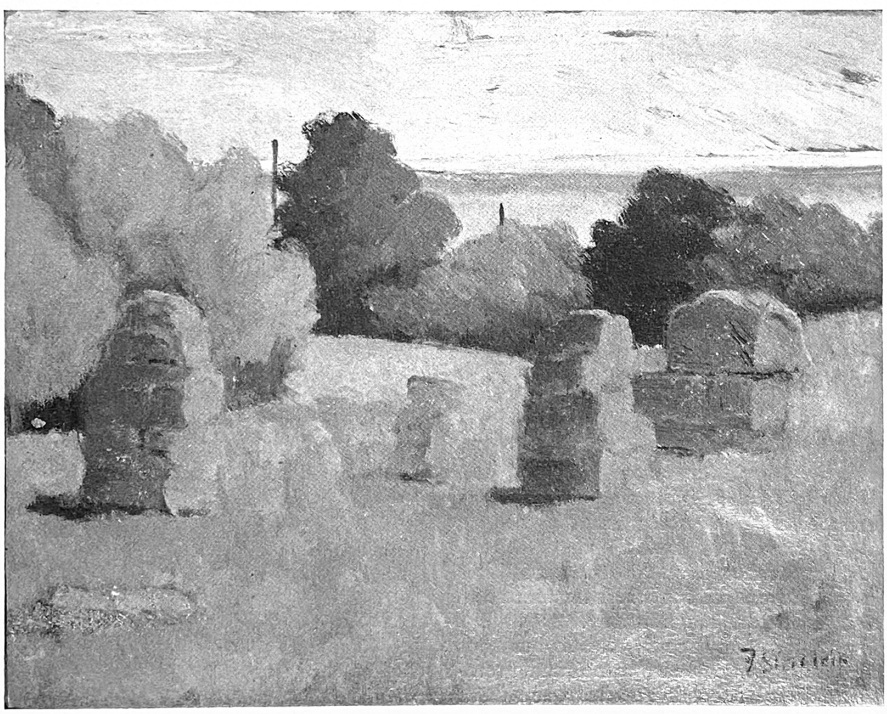
of the board—the smooth side in this case. Presumably it has been sized, but not primed. This certainly makes a pleasant ground to paint on, but I only hope that it doesn't cause darkening later, when the thinner areas of the paint become slightly more translucent. I know that most people shrug off any suggestion that their pictures might deteriorate; they either feel that it won't happen for fifty years, or else are too modest to think it matters. I think they are wrong on both counts, usually. Darkening can happen within a comparatively short time; and there is no knowing whether a picture of yours may not be of the greatest interest in later times. I use the word "interest" on purpose. No one is suggesting that we are dealing with masterpieces; but it is not only masterpieces which continue to interest people.

The colour of the yellow foreground was one of the features of Mr Sinclair's picture that first attracted me. It is very solid, with only slight tonal changes, but is full of the most subtle alterations of colour. These move from cool to warm, from greyish- or greenish-yellow to pink, and effectually prevent this area from becoming too monotonous or hot. The hay bales are well drawn, too, with a certain variety in their construction and a very good sense of exactly what the colour does in the shadow. I would particularly suggest that the junction between the bales and the stubble field is worth examining closely. This join, and the shadow cast by the bales, has been painted with considerable subtlety. Another refinement is the edge of shadow between the light side and the shadow. You will find (or at any rate I can see in the original) a continually varying edge here; sometimes it is quite sharp and hard, and in other places it softens. This is very much how things actually work in nature, and it gives me a lot of pleasure to see such keen observation.



Balmoral Castle — Jennie Lynn

Hay Bales — F. Sinclair



The upper part of the picture, from the bottoms of the trees upwards, is all cool. The trees themselves are greyish and brownish greens, the sky is a grey-blue. The edges of the foliage are, again, very skilfully managed. Looking at the panel as a whole, with the overlapping edges of paint in mind, I am struck by the fact that in many places it looks almost as if wet paint had been dragged lightly over dry; and yet the whole feeling of the picture is of a sketch done straight off. I wonder if Mr Sinclair was using something like megilp or Maroger medium, which allowed him to work solidly over half-dry colour without disturbing it?

Final date for entry April 15th

We have been receiving large numbers of pictures for this competition, and I would like to remind all readers who are thinking of sending in to make sure that their pictures are securely labelled. Gummed labels stuck to the back of hardboard, on to that rough surface, have a nasty habit of falling off at the least provocation. Sellotape stuck across will help to keep labels in place, and as a further precaution it isn't a bad thing to write your name and address on the panel.

THE CITY ART GALLERY BRISTOL

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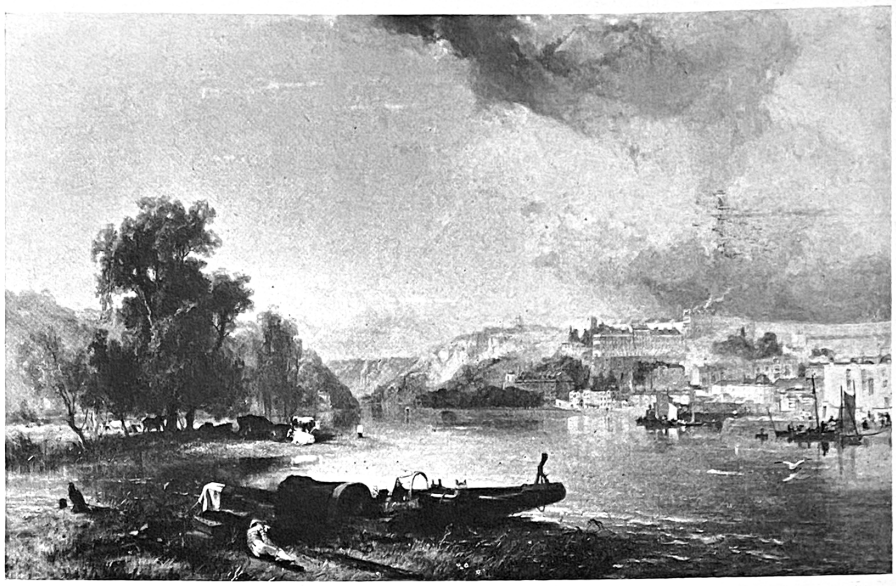
here not only for that reason—one hardly ever sees any work by this woman artist, the pupil and model of Manet—but also because it is such a charming painting in its own right. The woman's head is painted with Manet's blond and luminous touch, and is an object lesson in the construction of a head with only the lightest shadow areas. I have sometimes wondered whether Manet might not have come into her studio one day and put a few touches himself on this painting. But perhaps this is unfair to Eva Gonzales; the handling over the whole canvas is extremely sensitive, with a light, sketchy touch. She herself was, of course, the model for Manet's big portrait in the National Gallery, where she is shown sitting at her easel in a very nice white dress. Obviously her appearance was as charming as her painting.

Local Scenes

There are many other fine paintings in this part of the collection, including a lovely small Seurat, a fine Pissarro lent by the Tate and interesting pictures by Carrière, Couture and Le Brun, but I will go straight on through the Italian, Flemish and 18th century English rooms, pausing only to mention a beautiful Venetian portrait by Carpaccio, for this is only a short and fleeting visit and I am anxious to renew acquaintance with a group of pictures which I couldn't see anywhere else but in Bristol. These are the 19th century paintings of local scenes, often painted by local artists.

J. B. Pyne's *Clifton from Ashton Meadows* and his *View of the Avon from Durdham Down* are hazy, luminous and yet precisely detailed visions of a countrified Bristol of 135 years ago—which still, I must say, seems to have a good deal in common with my own Bristol of only 24 years back. There are other local landscapes here by artists such as Danby and Muller, as well as by lesser names, which I find myself poring over, day-dreaming about familiar places. I am always grateful to the Gallery for displaying them so sympathetically.



Clifton from Ashton Meadows — J. B. Pyne

Another local Bristol artist of the early 19th century is well shown here. Her pictures never fail to catch my eye when I come into the Gallery, for she was one of those naïve painters whose pictures of everyday life and manners are unfailingly interesting long after many serious and up-to-date professionals have been forgotten. Her name was Rolinda Sharples, and her rather stiff, careful and wholly charming canvases have titles like *The Cloak Room, Clifton Assembly Rooms* and *The Stoppage of the Bank*.

I have now arrived at one of my favourite subjects, Victorian genre painting, and Bristol has some superb examples to offer me. Two pictures have been particular favourites of mine for a long time. *Weston Sands*, painted in 1864 by W. Hopkins and E. Havell, is reproduced here in colour. Don't ask me how this collaboration was arranged, or whether Hopkins did the landscape and Havell the figures, I don't know. But it was obviously a collaboration that worked, and produced a document as full

Children saying goodnight — Webster

Portrait of a Boy: Clausen

Portrait of the Artist's Mother: Gilman

Portrait of a Lady: Carpaccio

of flavour and acute observation as a page of Dickens. The other painting is by Webster, an admirable painter of interiors who belongs to the same period as Wilkie and Mulready, and who has always been overshadowed by them. He excelled in affectionate or humorous domestic scenes. *A Village Choir* in the Victoria and Albert is a fine example, with its Dutch precision and clarity and its quiet grasp of contrasting character, expressed perfectly, without any over-statement, in heads an inch or two high.

Bristol's example, showing the children of a family saying goodnight, would no doubt have been dismissed as mere sentimental genre a few years ago. By this time, however, I hope that we are better able to look at such a picture without preconceptions, and appreciate its learned design and its great skill in relating so many figures and heads so exactly in relation to the space of the interior.

Before leaving the Gallery I must mention an admirable innovation of the present Director, Mr. Arnold Wilson. A display has been set up dealing with a contemporary artist working in or near the city. This is changed every so often, and contained, when I saw it, examples of original paintings, photographs, colour slides, documents and biographical information—a real and useful service to the living art of the district.***

PAINTING THE NUDE

continued from page 24

In colour, the colour degrades as it disappears towards blue. I will deal with colour perspective in another issue.

Perspective Within the Figure

In thinking about perspective it is only too easy to think of things outside the figures we are painting. We think about the background and the figure's relation to other objects and other figures.

But it is only by a complete comprehension of perspective within the figure that we approach a situation where we can draw a figure at all.

Since the figure is constructed of limbs that can move into any lateral or vertical position we have both railway track sleepers and telegraph poles at once! In addition the torso is only in rare moments totally vertical. If we were dealing with a perfect cylinder instead of a human torso we should have enough problems. As it is the torso is as lumpy and irregular as a sack of potatoes, with the exception that certain human irregularities are consistent.

There are two aspects of this type of perspective that must briefly be touched upon here: lateral division and foreshortening. The article on work methods will examine them more fully.

In the case of lateral division, draw an imaginary line down the centre of the figure. The figure is thus perfectly divided into two equal halves.

Now get your model to bend at a 45 degree angle. If you draw your imaginary line through nose, navel, pelvis and between the feet you have a very different picture. Shoulder width, chest width, pelvis width and even face width are now all unequal, the side nearer to you being about two-thirds of the total width, or twice as long as the far side.

With foreshortening you will see that an arm hanging down is almost one arm's length longer than an arm with a finger pointing straight at your nose. Evidently, there is a range of shortening effects visible within this quadrant as the three-dimensional body cuts into your two-dimensional picture planes.

Thus, in *Reclining Figure* there is an almost grotesque shortening of the arms, while the thighs change from cones to cylinders. An extreme example of experimental work, this picture illustrates foreshortening beyond which it would be unwise to go. It was done by viewing the model through one eye.

Referring back to *Kneeling Figure*, the right calf and left thigh show a more normal example of foreshortening, and this can also be seen in a general way in the colour plate *Girl Asleep in an Armchair*.***

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